

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 053576

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEC

SUBJECT: US-EC CONSULTATIONS

REF: DUBLIN 427 (NOTAL)

ANKARA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN

1. AT NEXT MEETING WITH IRISH FOREIGN OFFICE IN CONTEXT OF US-EC CONSULTATIONS, WHICH WE ASSUME WILL BE LARGELY DEVOTED TO DEBRIEFING ON RESULTS OF EC SUMMIT, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON FOLLOWING.

2. EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. PLEASE CONVEY OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE INFORMATION WHICH THE IRISH HAVE PROVIDED US CONCERNING THE EC'S PROPOSALS FOR TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION
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WITH THE ARAB NATIONS. YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT (1) ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO MAKE THE NINE'S DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD UNDER THE "DENATIONALIZED EXPERTS" FORMULA ON ISSUE BETWEEN US, WE CONTINUE TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT PLO PARTICIPATION

IN THE DIALOGUE, HOWEVER DISGUISED, AND (2) WE FEAR THAT THIS WILL LEAD THE DIALOGUE IN A POLITICAL DIRECTION.

3. ETHIOPIA. EC PRESIDENCY MAY WISH TO CONVEY FOLLOWING US APPRAISAL OF SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA TO EC "AFRICAN GROUP" FOR ITS INFORMATION IN CONNECTION WITH STUDY OF ERITREA PROBLEM. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS ARE PRECIS OF TESTIMONY GIVEN MARCH 5 BY ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICA, EDWARD W. MULCAHY, BEFORE HFAC SUBCOMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY

AFFAIRS, AND MAY BE TREATED AS UNCLASSIFIED.

4. THE PROVINCE OF ERITREA IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE REST OF ETHIOPIA PRIMARILY BY THE FOREIGN INFLUENCES TO WHICH IT HAS BEEN SUBJECTED. ALTHOUGH ONCE AT THE HEART OF THE ETHIOPIAN KINGDOM OF AXUM, FROM WHICH THE PRESENT ETHIOPIAN STATE IS DESCENDED, ITS LOCATION ON THE RED SEA HAS MADE IT MORE SUBJECT THAN THE REST OF ETHIOPIA TO INTRUSION BY NON-AFRICANS. THUS, ARABS, TURKS, EGYPTIANS, ITALIANS AND BRITISH HAVE AT VARIOUS TIMES OCCUPIED AND RULED IT.

5. THE ETHNIC MAKEUP OF THE PROVINCE IS IMPORTANT FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. THE POPULATION IS DIVIDED, ROUGHLY HALF AND HALF, BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS, ABOUT ONE MILLION EACH. THE CHRISTIANS, BELONGING CHIEFLY TO THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX--SOMETIMES CALLED "COPTIC"--CHURCH, LIVE MAINLY ON THE HIGH PLATEAU IN THE CENTER, RANGING UP TO NEARLY 8000-FOOT ALTITUDES. THE MUSLIMS IN THE MAIN INHABIT THE LOWER SLOPES OF THE HIGHLANDS AND THE DESERT-LIKE NORTHERN AND COASTAL AREAS, AND CONSIST OF SOME SIX OR SEVEN MAJOR ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC GROUPS.

6. FOLLOWING ERITREA'S INTEGRATION WITH ETHIOPIA AND THE END OF THE FEDERAL ARRANGEMENT IN LATE 1962 THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT LAUNCHED AN ARMED RESISTANCE AGAINST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. IT WAS--AND STILL IS--A PREDOMINANTLY, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, MUSLIM MOVEMENT. LATER, IN 1966, A NEW MOVEMENT, THE POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES WAS FORMED. IT IS LESS HEAVILY MUSLIM, SMALLER THAN THE ELF AND APPEARS TO ESPOUSE A MARXIST PHILOSOPHY. UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO, WHEN THEY AGREED TO COOPERATE, THE TWO MOVEMENTS REMAINED AT LOGGERHEADS AND SOMETIMES HAVE FOUGHT EACH OTHER. AT ANY RATE, THE INSURGENCY BEGAN IN LATE 1962 AND HAS BEEN GOING ON EVER SINCE, ALTHOUGH RATHER SPORADICALLY UNTIL THE PRESENCE IN ERITREA--UP TO 3,500 ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO--AMERICANS WERE NEVER MOLESTED, EXCEPT FOR THE ACCIDENTAL KILLING OF ONE SERVICE MAN AND THE KIDNAPPING OF SEVERAL OIL EXPLORATION PERSONNEL AND A MISSIONARY NURSE LAST YEAR.

7. IN 1974, WHEN A GROUP OF YOUNG OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN GRADUALLY TOOK OVER CONTROL OF ETHIOPIA, THERE SEEMED TO BE A GOOD CHANCE THAT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT COULD BE REACHED TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. AN ERITREAN, GENERAL AMAN MICHAEL ANDOM, BECAME PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT SEEMED DISPOSED TO TAKE STEPS TO EASE ERITREAN GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, AMAN,

WHO HAD GAINED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ERITREAN PEOPLE, WAS KILLED IN NOVEMBER, AND THEREFORE WHAT OPPORTUNITY EXISTED AT THAT TIME FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WAS LOST. SUBSEQUENTLY EFFORTS WERE MADE BY THE NEW LEADERSHIP IN ADDIS ABABA TO GET THE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED. THE ELF/PLF INSISTED ON ACCEPTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE AS A PRECONDITION TO AGREEING TO SIT DOWN AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO ETHIOPIA. FIGHTING BROKE OUT ON JANUARY 31. THE TWO SIDES SEEM QUITE FAR APART NOW WITH THE ERITREAN MOVEMENTS INSISTING IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON FULL INDEPENDENCE AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REFUSING IN ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO COUNTENANCE ANY BREACH OF THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

8. THE UNITED STATES HAS TRADITIONALLY HAD FRIENDLY, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND IMPORTANT INTERESTS THERE, INCLUDING THE KAGNEW COMMUNICATIONS STATION ESTABLISHED AT ASMARA SINCE 1942, ACCESS TO ETHIOPIA'S AIRFIELDS AND PORTS AND A POTENTIAL MARKET OF 26 MILLION PEOPLE. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS LONG-TIME RELATION-
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SHIP IS WORTH PRESERVING. IN RECENT YEARS THE STRATEGIC LOCATION OF ETHIOPIA, CLOSE TO THE MIDDLE EAST OIL SUPPLIES AND THE INDIAN OCEAN OIL ROUTES, HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. PROTRACTED INSTABILITY IN THIS SECOND MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN BLACK AFRICA COULD HAVE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS.

9. MOREOVER, THE BLACK AFRICAN STATES DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE DISINTEGRATION OF ETHIOPIA. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THEIR MOST RESPECTED PRINCIPLES THAT THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY BE RESPECTED, AND NOT CHANGED BY FORCE OF ARMS. THEY WOULD BE VERY CRITICAL OF US IF WE WERE TO WITHDRAW OUR SUPPORT FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME. SOME AFRICAN STATES HAVE, IN FACT, ALREADY EXPRESSED TO US IN CONFIDENCE THEIR DEEP CONCERN FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION.

10. PURSUANT TO OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH ETHIOPIA, WHICH DATES FROM MAY 1953, THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND EQUIPPED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON AMERICAN LINES. IN SPITE OF THIS, THE UNITED STATES HAS, EVER SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE INSURGENCY IN 1962, CON-

SCIOUSLY REFRAINED FROM BECOMING DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS INTERNAL DIFFICULTY BY PRECLUDING ANY ADVISORY EFFORT IN THE OPERATIONS. WE DO NOT INTEND TO BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PRESENT CONFLICT. OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA OVER 22 YEARS HAS TOTALED APPROXIMATELY \$200 MILLION. IN FY 1974 THE FIGURE WAS \$22.3 MILLION, OF WHICH

\$11.3 MILLION WAS GRANT ASSISTANCE AND \$11 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS. BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONALLY-IMPOSED CEILINGS ON MAP FUNDS FOR AFRICA AND THE COMPETING REQUESTS OF OTHER AFRICAN FRIENDS WE HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BE AS RESPONSIVE TO ETHIOPIA'S REQUESTS FOR AS HIGH A LEVEL OF MILITARY SUPPORT AS THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE LIKED.

11. FOR MANY YEARS THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO OUR LOCATING THE IMPORTANT KAGNEW COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY IN ASMARA. OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, BECAUSE OF IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, THE USE OF SATELLITES, ETC., WE WERE ABLE GRADUALLY TO PHASE DOWN OUR ONCE LARGE CONFIDENTIAL

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RADIO FACILITIES AT ASMARA AND TO REDUCE OUR PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS THERE TO LESS THAN 200 AT THE START OF THIS YEAR. WHEN SERIOUS CONFLICT FLARED UP A MONTH AGO WE EVACUATED ALL DEPENDENTS AND NON-ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL. CURRENTLY, IN ADDITION TO 44 UNIFORMED AND CIVILIAN CONTRACT PERSONNEL REMAINING AT KAGNEW, THERE ARE NINE PEOPLE AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN ASMARA. IN SPITE OF THE GREATLY REDUCED STAFF, KAGNEW IS STILL BEING MAINTAINED AS A LINK IN THE WORLDWIDE NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. EXCEPT FOR MINOR DAMAGE DUE TO STRAY SMALL-ARMS FIRE, AMERICAN PROPERTY HAS NOT BEEN HARMED, NOR HAS ANY AMERICAN CITIZEN SUFFERED INJURY. OUTSIDE ASMARA, CHIEFLY AT MISSION STATIONS AWAY FROM THE COMBAT AREAS, ANOTHER 30-40 AMERICANS CAN BE FOUND ELSEWHERE IN ERITREA.

12. JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER THE SERIOUS FIGHTING ERUPTED PRESIDENT NIMEIRI OF THE NEIGHBORING SUDAN EXTENDED HIS GOOD OFFICES TO BOTH SIDES IN THE CONFLICT, OFFERING TO MEDIATE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. WHILE HIS EFFORTS HAVE NOT MET WITH ANY REPORTED SUCCESS, BECAUSE THE PUBLIC POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES REMAIN FAR APART, THE PEACE-MAKING EFFORT IS STILL GOING FORWARD. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE ERITREAN PROBLEM, FOR WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE A LASTING SOLUTION.

13. A LITTLE OVER TWO WEEKS AGO THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, FOR WHOM WE ARE THE SOLE SOURCE OF AMMUNITION AND SPARE PARTS, REQUESTED AN EMERGENCY RESUPPLY OF AMMUNITION PLUS SOME NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT AND OFFERED TO PAY IN CASH FOR IT. THE REQUEST IS UNDER ACTIVE REVIEW. SINCE WE RECEIVED IT, WE HAVE BEEN STUDYING IT AND REFINING IT IN CONSTANT

EXCHANGES WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND OUR MILITARY MISSION IN THAT COUNTRY.

14. ANY ABRUPT CESSATION OR REDUCTION OF AID AT THIS CRITICAL PERIOD COULD HAVE A HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE EFFECT ON

OUR LONG-STANDING RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED COUNTRY. AS SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID, IT WOULD INVOLVE CUTTING OFF MILITARY SUPPORT TO A COUNTRY WHOSE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS BASED ON AMERICAN CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMS AT THE PRECISE MOMENT WHEN IT NEEDS IT.

IN OUR DELIBERATIONS WE HAVE CONSTANTLY BEFORE US THE LARGER POLITICAL AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF OUR DECISION.

IF WE SAY "YES," WILL IT BE SEEN IN CERTAIN QUARTERS AS INVOLVEMENT IN THE CURRENT INTERNAL SITUATION?

IF WE SAY "NO," WILL IT BE SEEN BY OTHERS AS FAILURE TO HELP A TRADITIONAL FRIEND IN AN HOUR OF NEED?

THE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST IS RECEIVING THOROUGH, HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATION BY THE AGENCIES CONCERNED; NO FINAL DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN. INGERSOLL

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